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# World Food System Grants Platform Supports New Cross-Disciplinary Food System Research Projects

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Media Release

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The ETH Zurich World Food System Center (WFSC) is pleased to announce five new cross-disciplinary, food system research projects funded through the Center's WFS Grants Platform. The two research programs on this platform, the Mercator Research Program and the Coop Research Program, provide support for these projects totaling more than 1.6 million CHF.

The WFS Grants Platform supports new cross-disciplinary and solution oriented research to address food system challenges, with 27 projects funded to date. The five new projects, which will launch by summer, will tackle pressing issues such as improving food production and safety and assessing food system resilience. Investigators at ETH Zurich as well as partners in Africa, North and South America, and Europe will focus their new work on a range of foodstuffs, including chicken, algae, beans, cacao, and bananas. One project strives to improve the production of algae as a novel protein source, while another seeks to reduce food-borne disease in chickens. Another project focuses on breeding of climbing beans, which could help improve the livelihood of smallholder farmers in the tropics. In addition, the resilience of organic versus conventional farming of tropical and Swiss crops will be assessed and compared in two new studies. Interdisciplinary approaches applied in these projects include process innovation and resilience analysis of whole food value chains.

All projects were subject to a rigorous evaluation by an independent academic panel with additional external reviews and an assessment process that takes into account scientific excellence and relevance to the programs. The final funding decisions lie with the ETH Zurich VP for Research and Corporate Relations.

## Projects

### Coop Research Program: Postdoctoral Research Projects

Principal Investigator	Chair, ETH Zurich	Project Title
Prof. Alexander Mathys	Sustainable Food Processing	New sustainable food formulations based on algae proteins
Prof. Christophe Lacroix	Food Biotechnology	Application of <i>Lactobacillus reuteri</i> to naturally prevent <i>Campylobacter</i> colonization of chicken
Prof. Bruno Studer	Molecular Plant Breeding	Increasing genetic gain in climbing bean development

## Mercator Research Program: Doctoral Projects

Principal Investigator	Chair, ETH Zurich	Project Title
Prof. Johan Six	Sustainable Agroecosystems	Assessing the role of organic value chains in enhancing food system resilience
Prof. Nina Buchmann	Grassland Sciences	Resilience of organic and conventional production systems to drought

## Funding

The **World Food System Grants Platform** enables new interdisciplinary research that contributes knowledge and solutions to food system challenges. With these five new projects, the platform has supported 14 doctoral and 15 postdoctoral researchers since 2012.

The **Mercator Research Program**, supported by the Mercator Foundation Switzerland, was initiated in 2011 and aims to explore the role and potential of organic production systems (certified or non-certified) to contribute to global food security. It supports doctoral research projects supervised by WFSC members, in collaboration with partners from different disciplines and organizations.

The **Coop Research Program**, supported by the Coop Sustainability Fund, was initiated in 2013 to enable research that addresses challenges and opportunities for sustainability in food value chains. The program aims to provide knowledge necessary to drive food value chains towards goals of quality and quantity that support human and environmental health and create value for all stakeholders. It supports postdoctoral research projects supervised by WFSC members, in collaboration with relevant external partners.

## Further information

Project abstracts are available with this media release, posted in the News of the World Food System Center website: <http://www.worldfoodsystem.ethz.ch/news.html>.

Fact sheets for the new projects will be available online soon.

Information about ongoing WFSC projects can be found at [www.worldfoodsystem.ethz.ch/research](http://www.worldfoodsystem.ethz.ch/research).

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